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Viewing cable 06TELAVIV3245, ISRAELI MOD PRESSED TO TAKE QUICK STEPS TO HELP

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06TELAVIV3245	2006-08-16 10:51	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Tel Aviv

Appears in these articles:

[not](#)
[yet](#)
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null
Carol X Weakley 08/16/2006 04:09:48 PM From DB/Inbox: Carol X Weakley

Cable
Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 03245

SIPDIS
CXTela:
ACTION: POL
INFO: DCM IPSC DAO PD IMO AMB AID ADM RSO CONS RES
ECON

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: CDA:GACRETZ
DRAFTED: POL:MCKEAYS
CLEARED: POL:NOLSEN, DAO:PJDERMER

VZCZCTVI546
OO RUEHC RUEHXK RUEHSW RUEKJCS RHEHNSC RUEKJCS

DE RUEHTV #3245/01 2281051
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 161051Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5676
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 0803
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 003245

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA (MAHER), PM
PENTAGON FOR OSD ISRAELI DESK OFFICER (ANDERSON)
NSC FOR LOGERFO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/15/2016

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SUBJECT: ISRAELI MOD PRESSED TO TAKE QUICK STEPS TO HELP
LEBANESE; SAYS IT WILL WAIT UNTIL MNF IS DEPLOYED

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Gene A. Cretz. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY

11. (C) Responding to the Charge's urgings that Israel act quickly to end the sea blockade of Lebanon, re-open Beirut International Airport, and allow mobile bridges to be erected in southern Lebanon to facilitate shipments of outside assistance to needy Lebanese, Israeli MOD POL-MIL Bureau Head Amos Gilad said on August 15 that Israel understands the need to "win the hearts and minds" of the Lebanese during the immediate post-hostilities period, but prefers to take such steps after the multinational force is deployed. Gilad claimed that Iran is pumping money into Hizballah coffers so that Iran and Hizballah can make maximum gains on what he termed the Lebanese people's desperation. He said Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states want to counter this with their own funds, and hope to win the right to rebuild Lebanon. Gilad cautioned that he fears that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states may mobilize too slowly. Gilad said that Gaza remains a source of frustration for Israel, and lamented that PA Chairman Abu Mazen appears alone in his efforts to "reconstruct" the PA. On Syria, Gilad said that President Assad views himself as strong, and noted that Israel is carefully watching the Syria military, concerned that Syria might threaten Israel over the Golan Heights. END SUMMARY.

ISRAEL PREFERS FOR THE MNF TO DEPLOY FIRST

12. (C) In an August 15 meeting at the Israeli MOD, the Charge urged Israeli MOD POL-MIL Bureau Head MGEN (Res.) Amos Gilad to take quick steps to address the needs of the Lebanese people in the wake of the cessation of hostilities, so as to demonstrate the international community and the GOL's concern, show that Israel is not against them, and forestall Hizballah addressing their needs and winning over their support. Specifically, the Charge proposed that Israel:

-- permit the clearance of unexploded ordnance and allow minimal repairs necessary at Beirut International Airport (BIA) to allow flights into the airport;

-- allow humanitarian cargo and passenger shuttle service to fly into BIA from Amman and Cairo as soon as possible;

-- allow the temporary importation of bridging equipment into southern Lebanon to facilitate Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) deployment and the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF); and

-- expedite the delivery of assistance via sea, especially by lifting the blockade of shipments from reputable humanitarian assistance organizations. The Charge suggested that it would be better to reverse the current formula from "blanket refusal with exceptions," to "blanket permission with the right to refuse."

13. (C) The Charge urged that the GOI act on these suggestions, as well as the longer list provided a few days earlier, to ensure that Hizballah's efforts were quickly countered. Gilad indicated that he had discussed some of these proposals a few days earlier with the Ambassador, but said that Israel's preference is to wait until the multinational force (MNF) is deployed in southern Lebanon before taking the proposed actions. Gilad stressed that he understood U.S. thinking on the issue, but said that he is looking at it from a strategic point of view: "The main issue is who will reconstruct Lebanon. Lebanon has charity funds that are dominated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Hizballah. Iran is determined to help. We have information now that Iran is flooding Hizballah with cash because we destroyed Hizballah's banks. The one who wins the right to reconstruct Lebanon will win its future. Nasrallah understands this."

14. (C) Regarding the sea blockade, Gilad said that the Prime Minister's Office had determined that it is legal to continue the blockade as long as the MNF remains outside of southern Lebanon. He also claimed, without offering any further explanation, that the volume of assistance that could be brought in by ship would not merit lifting the blockade quickly. On a positive note, he said that IDF reps had met with LAF liaison officers in a meeting organized by UNIFIL in Naquoura, Lebanon, and had been told that the LAF and MNF's deployment could occur rapidly: "We will wait until the MNF is deployed in a few days."

GILAD SAYS SAUDI ARABIA, GULF STATES DETERMINED TO HELP

15. (C) Gilad claimed that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are determined to counter the in-flow of Iranian funds to reconstruct Lebanon by sending their own reconstruction funds to the Government of Lebanon (GOL). He expressed concern, however, that the funds might be sent through Swiss banks -- in which case, he claimed, they might be diverted -- and that they might also arrive late: "The problem with the Gulf States is that there is a gap between understanding and implementation." He observed that Hizballah is giving financial assistance directly to the Shiite population from the affected areas. Any funds coming from the GOL will be coming from Sunnis, he noted. "This will also complicate getting assistance to needy Shiite victims. In this case, Iran has the advantage."

16. (C) The Charge pressed again, urging Israel not to "cede the field." Gilad responded that Israel should be able to re-open BIA within 20 hours. He said that Saudi Arabia is ready to begin reconstruction, and that the IDF is facilitating visits by Saudi representatives to Beirut. Gilad nevertheless cautioned that the Saudis are Sunnis, and the Shiites will not likely welcome their offers of assistance.

GILAD PREDICTS HIZBALLAH WILL HELP IDF WITHDRAWAL

17. (C) Responding to the Charge's question about IDF withdrawal, Gilad said he predicts that Hizballah will reach a compromise with the GOL to facilitate IDF withdrawal from Lebanon. The compromise, he said, will be done in such a way as to permit "no visible showing of arms" by Hizballah in southern Lebanon. This, he claimed, was a modus operandi that former PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat used successfully in the past. Hizballah, Gilad asserted, has no intention of disarming. Gilad said that Hizballah is not interested in a

confrontation with the GOL: "It will seek a compromise with the GOL so as to stay a part of it. It wants legitimacy." Gilad said that Israel agrees with the U.S. that "most of the GOL" should be strengthened.

ISRAEL'S EXPECTATIONS OF THE UN SYG'S CEASEFIRE REPORT

18. (C) Responding to the Charge's question about what Israel expects from the UN Secretary General's (UN SYG) upcoming report on the ceasefire, Gilad said that Israel would want to hear the UN SYG say that kidnapped Israeli soldiers should be released in accordance with UNSCR 1701. He acknowledged that the issue is not covered in any of the UNSCR's operative paragraphs, but asserted that it must be carried out -- through the GOL.

19. (C) Gilad said Israel expects that the UN SYG will also address the Shebaa Farms issue. He suggested that Israel would not welcome this, and would come up with a "creative response." Regarding potential violations of the ceasefire, Gilad said that Israel would want a trilateral mechanism to monitor and report such violations: "They are important matters."

GAZA SOURCE OF CONTINUING FRUSTRATION

110. (C) Turning to Gaza, Gilad labeled it a source of continuing, real frustration for Israel. He noted that Defense Minister Peretz had ordered the opening of the crossing between Egypt and Gaza at Rafah against the wishes of the Israeli Security Agency (ISA) and the IDF, which fear that any opening will allow terrorists to be smuggled across the border. Gilad claimed that some terrorists did attempt to enter Gaza, were "politely detained" by the Palestinian Authority, and then released. He also claimed that a "prominent terrorist" succeeded in leaving Gaza, and said these kinds of exits were necessary so that the Palestinian Authority can consolidate power. Gilad said that the PA is suffering significant internal problems: "Dahlan is against Abu Mazen, and Abu Mazen is still abroad." He said that Israel would welcome the "reconstruction of the PA" by Abu Mazen and the Presidential Guard, if it were feasible: "A unity government, on the other hand, is problematic. The problem is that Abu Mazen is alone. The younger generation needs leadership. Even though Hamas is incapable of ruling and chaos prevails, Hamas is still popular."

ISRAEL KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON SYRIA

111. (C) Gilad noted that the number of Kassam rocket launches from Gaza into green-line Israel has decreased, but attributed this to vigilance and operational successes on the part of the Israeli security services. He said that it is important that kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is released, but lamented that the decision would probably have to be made in Damascus. Gilad said that Syrian President Assad is looking smug and feeling content, and predicted that Syria will threaten Israel about the Golan Heights soon. He said that the alert level of the Syrian army was unprecedented since the Yom Kippur War, but added that Israeli "takes it coolly."

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CRETZ